



Tips and Tricks: English Parts of Speech



Introduction:

If you like to play video games, chances are you have probably looked at a magazine or browsed a website for tips and tricks that will help you advance through a challenging game more easily.

Learning the English Language is certainly as challenging as a video game, so here are some tips and tricks to help you use English more expertly.

Tip #1: About the Parts of Speech

Parts of Speech is a phrase that means the types of words that are put together to make a meaningful thought, sentence, or paragraph. A video game has graphics, controllers, buttons, music, and sound effects. The English Language has nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. These are the basic parts of speech.

Tip #2: About Nouns

Nouns are words for people, places, things, and ideas. *Soldier*, *Pizza Hut*, *Playstation 2*, and *freedom* are nouns.

Noun Trick A: Noun Position in a Sentence

Nouns most often perform an action or have an action done to them. They often follow words like “a,” “an,” or “the.” Look at the following sentence. Based on position, which words are the nouns?

The dragon threw a frisbee into the window of the castle.

If you said the nouns are *dragon*, *frisbee*, *window*, and *castle*—you’re right! How did you know?

Noun Trick B: Noun Endings

If the placement doesn't give it away, you can often identify a noun by its ending. Look at the endings below.

-dom	as in <i>freedom, wisdom, kingdom</i>
-ity	as in <i>ability, facility, city</i>
-ment	as in <i>cement, contentment, retirement</i>
-sion/tion	as in <i>friction, action, vision</i>
-ness	as in <i>happiness, friendliness, wilderness</i>
-ance/ence	as in <i>independence, assistance, occurrence</i>
-er/or	as in <i>motor, actor, fighter</i>
-ist	as in <i>violinist, optimist, scientist</i>
-ician	as in <i>musician, magician, pediatrician</i>



Noun Trick C: Plurals

Only nouns can be made singular or plural. Kitten is singular—one kitty. Kittens is plural—more than one kitty. Take a word like the verb “destroy” or the adjective “scary.” Can you make either word plural? Nope! See below.

“There are seven **destroys** in the box.” —sounds stupid, huh? Only nouns
“There are seven **scarys** in the box.” can be made plural.

Tip #3: About Verbs

Verbs are action words. These are words that show you what is happening. *Catch, eat, fly, knock, believe, and discover* are verbs.

Verb Trick A: Verb Position in a Sentence

Verbs are placed where action is needed in the sentence. Verbs most often follow nouns. Look at the following sentence. Based on position, which words are the verbs?

The dragon threw a frisbee and broke the window of the castle.

If you said the verbs are *threw* and *broke*—you're right! How did you know?

Verb Trick B: Verb Endings

If the placement doesn't give it away, you can often identify a verb by its ending. Look at the endings below.

-en	as in <i>brighten, soften, weaken</i>
-ize	as in <i>visualize, realize, prioritize</i>
-ate	as in <i>activate, captivate, relate</i>
-ify/fy	as in <i>verify, defy, purify</i>
-s/es	as in <i>makes, travels, punctures</i>
-ed	as in <i>created, kicked, realized</i>



Verb Trick C: Tense

Verbs are the only words that show tense (time). In other words, verbs show whether something happened in the past, is happening in the present, or will happen in the future.

I traveled, I travel, and I will travel—notice the forms of travel all show a tense (past, present, and future).

Tip #4: About Adjectives

Adjectives are words that describe nouns. *Friendly, purple, terrifying,* and *fifty* are all adjectives when they describe a noun.

Adjective Trick A: Adjective Position in a Sentence

Adjectives most often come directly before the noun they describe. Look at the following sentence. Based on position, which words are the adjectives?

The evil dragon threw a frisbee into the open window of the stone castle.

If you said the adjectives are *evil, open,* and *stone*—you're right! How did you know?

Adjectives Trick B: Adjective Endings

If the placement doesn't give it away, you can often identify an adjective by its ending. Look at the endings below and on the next page.

-ive	as in <i>selective, extensive, intensive</i>
-en	as in <i>broken, wooden, sullen</i>
-ic	as in <i>heroic, magic, poetic</i>
-al	as in <i>rural, financial, physical</i>

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-able	as in <i>portable, reliable, terrible</i>
-y	as in <i>hairy, rainy, sloppy</i>
-ous	as in <i>mysterious, furious, curious</i>
-ful	as in <i>hopeful, wonderful, careful</i>
-less	as in <i>careless, hopeless, homeless</i>

Tip #5: About Adverbs

Adverbs are words that describe verbs. Adverbs tell you how the action was done. *Carefully, swiftly, slowly, and happily* are all adverbs when they describe how an action was done.

Adverb Trick A: Adverb Position in a Sentence

Adverbs most often come directly before or directly after the verb in the sentence. Look at the following sentence. Based on position, which words are the adverbs?

The evil dragon flew swiftly above the stone castle, and the knights carefully looked out of the window to see the mighty creature.

If you said the adverbs are *swiftly* and *carefully*—you’re right! How did you know?

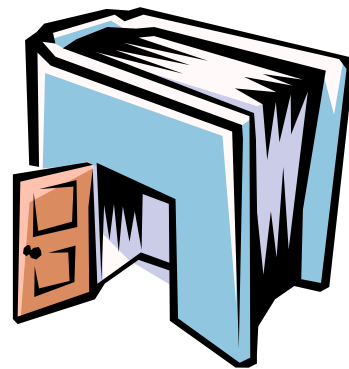
Adverbs Trick B: Adverb Endings

If the placement doesn’t give it away, you can often identify an adverb by its ending. Look at the ending below.

-ly	as in <i>quickly, slowly, sadly</i>
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Review: Look at the following sentences. Use your tips and tricks to identify all the nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Underline nouns, draw an arrow through verbs, circle adjectives, and draw a box around adverbs.

1. The fuzzy cat stalked the tiny mouse.
2. Aidan threw open the window and screamed to his friend.
3. Mary Lu completely forgot about her doctor’s appointment.
4. The volcano erupted violently, spewing hot ash, rock, and gas into the dark sky.



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5. The singer blushed and timidly backed off the stage because she forgot the words to the song.